

## **Summary of Partner Country Consultation on the Preparation of the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness**

1. ***Origin of the consultations.*** Following its June 2007 meeting, the High Level Forum (HLF 3) Steering Committee (SC) agreed to seek input from partner countries in the early stages of the planning for the HLF and asked the World Bank to lead this effort. The World Bank consequently organized a series of consultation meetings in Mauritius (June 20 and 21, side-by-side with a consultation on Vertical Programs), Accra (June 25, co-organized with Ghana), Honduras (August 23, co-organized with the Government of Honduras and supported financially by the IADB and the EC) and Philippines (September 17, co-organized with and co-sponsored by the Asian Development Bank). The list of participating countries can be found in Annex 1.
2. ***Organization of the meetings.*** The meetings were organized with a view to elicit as much participation as possible from partner country representatives. To the extent possible, participation was limited to one knowledgeable official per country (exceptions were made when requested by the country), who was sometimes the National Coordinator for the Paris Declaration (PD) monitoring process or otherwise involved in the Aid Effectiveness agenda. The background documentation (attached to the SC document on the Consultation Strategy) was short to avoid preempting any debate. Some meetings were attended by a few local donors; the DAC Secretariat was unable to attend the Honduras meeting, but that was attended by the UNDP and by the Japanese ambassador. In all cases, the (co-)chairs role was limited to introducing the various questions and summarizing the debates, while the other non-partner country participants generally acted as observers.
3. ***Main messages from the consultations.*** The discussions generally reconfirmed the messages coming from previous regional meetings, the Monitoring Survey, and other reviews and discussions. According to the participants there is progress at country level, but much still remains to be done in all areas of the PD. The issue of ownership dominated several of the meetings. A preference for “budget support” and associated issues of aid predictability and sustainability were a recurrent theme in the consultations; several of the participants in Mauritius pleaded for greater aid predictability in budget support and all other forms of assistance. Participants often mentioned the usefulness of including NGOs and civil society broadly in the process given the key role they sometimes play in aid delivery. Partners see the process of these consultations, and certainly the upcoming HLF3, as providing needed opportunities for learning from peers. They also reported that PD monitoring has been less than perfect and needs to be improved; nevertheless it is seen as a major contribution to the debate now and in Accra. A common view is that partners expect to have time to discuss the AAA before its adoption.
4. ***Perception of donors’ performance.*** Partners report that donors in their view remain reluctant to use country systems (including for monitoring and evaluation) and

they feel that “the goalposts are continually moving” in this regard. This comment referred to the full range of “country systems”, including project management, financial management, procurement, safeguards, monitoring and evaluation, and results. In their view donors could do better to support their improvement, and they rely on too many parallel PIUs and do not coordinate their analytic work as much as they could or should. Further coordination among donors is needed at the sector level work. Technical assistance is still too much donor driven and not aligned enough on countries’ priorities. The use of conditionality in budget support operations (lack of harmonization and use of political conditions with what is perceived as too wide a room for interpretation) and the impact on aid predictability came across as strong concerns, especially in Africa. Many participants expect more aid to be provided as budget support, while a number (particularly those with already large levels of budget support) clearly cautioned against the risks stemming from imperfect predictability and mentioned their willingness to revisit the ratio of BS vs. other forms of aid. Long-term sustainability of aid was also mentioned by some. A number of participants criticized aid as still being too tied. Aid is sometimes perceived as generally aligned on countries’ priorities but with insufficient flexibility at the sector level where donors tie their support to specific activities. A few participants mentioned donors’ incentives and HQ/field disconnect as issues for further work, and criticized aid allocation systems as not responding to countries’ needs (in particular, some MIC participants wish more concessional funding or smoother transition periods to non-concessional funding). Decentralization was considered to be a key issue in the process of implementing the Paris Declaration and Manila participants asked that more actions should be taken toward this.

**5. *Ownership, leadership and reforms.*** There is a wide recognition that ownership and leadership by the country are critical for improved aid effectiveness, have recently improved, but require greater capacity at all levels of government (including decentralized), especially aid management capacity which is seen as a central task for governments – and they expect donors to provide support in this area. Some mentioned aid policies or harmonization action plans as useful tools, and many want to learn from their peers in this area. The way the public administration is organized can influence ownership, and in particular imperfect communications between planning and budgeting functions weakens the link between sector medium-term planning and the annual budget, in turn hindering alignment efforts. The need for continuous attention to governance was mentioned by some, who insisted that by-passing country systems actually weakens governance. An important point made by participants in Manila was to have greater government involvement in the project preparation process as this is considered to be a key and logical aspect of improving country ownership and national capacity.

**6. *Other actors.*** The inclusion of civil society in aid effectiveness efforts is widely viewed as essential. Many participants mentioned NGOs as important actors and providers of significant amounts of aid who need to fully participate in the aid effectiveness efforts. The need to deepen ownership by engaging more with national parliaments was also mentioned. A few participants mentioned new and emerging donors, including foundations.

7. ***The Paris Declaration and its monitoring process.*** There are diverging views on the impact of the Paris Declaration (PD). For some (mostly in Latin America), the PD did not dramatically change donors' behavior; similarly, governments had already started their internal reforms before the adoption of the Declaration. Others (mostly in Africa) reported that the PD did raise the attention to harmonization and alignment and generated some positive change, although much remains to be done. Manila participants felt not enough focus was being given to the results management side of the Paris Declaration and further guidance and assistance from the donor community was crucial. Some participants criticized the monitoring process as too complex and too prone for local interpretation. Most expect the 2008 survey to be a major contribution to the HLF3 debates, to help base the discussions and the outcome (AAA) on evidence of progress and remaining challenges.

8. ***Accra preparation process.*** Many participants expressed a desire to learn from the experience of other countries, including across continents, in particular on ways to improve leadership and ownership. Facing what they perceive as high transaction costs to improve aid effectiveness some participants also expressed an interest in learning from "quick wins" and experiences in successful aid management. To be able to be endorsed at a political level, participants stressed that the AAA will have to be discussed well ahead of the Accra meeting; (sub)-regional meetings in the months prior to Accra could give such an occasion. Some Participants wish to hear in Accra more keynote speakers and panel members from partner countries.

9. ***Result of the informal survey.*** At the end of each meeting, an informal survey was conducted. A wide list of themes that could be discussed in Accra was distributed to participants, who could check as many themes as they wanted, as well as add other topics. The results are given in Annex 2. They broadly support the conclusions of the discussions, and they stress in particular the importance of the themes: strengthening ownership / budget support / aid predictability / conditionality and of the PD monitoring survey.

## **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS**

### **Annex 1 List of participants**

#### **Mauritius consultation**

Benin  
Botswana  
Ethiopia  
Haiti  
Madagascar  
Malawi  
Mauritius  
Mozambique  
Niger  
Rwanda  
Sierra Leone  
Tunisia  
Uganda  
Zambia

#### **Honduras consultation**

Bolivia  
Dominican Republic  
El Salvador  
Guatemala  
Guyana  
Honduras  
Jamaica  
Nicaragua  
Peru

#### **Ghana consultation**

Cameroon  
Ghana  
Kenya  
Mali  
Nigeria  
Senegal  
South Africa

#### **Philippines consultation**

Bangladesh  
Cambodia  
Indonesia  
Kyrgyz Republic  
Lao PDR  
Mongolia  
Nepal  
Pakistan  
Sri Lanka  
Vietnam

**Annex 2**  
**Results of the informal survey**

TOPICS for all workshops	Mauritius		Accra		Honduras		Manila		TOTAL	
	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	Participants %	# of mentions	Participants %
Monitoring implementation of the Paris Declaration (PD)	6	43%	4	57%	5	56%	7	58%	22	52%
Aid predictability	7	50%	3	43%	3	33%	7	58%	20	48%
Harmonization & Alignment Action Plans	6	43%	3	43%	4	44%	4	33%	17	40%
Experiences with budget support	4	29%	2	29%	6	67%	5	42%	17	40%
Untying of aid	3	21%	4	57%	3	33%	7	58%	17	40%
Strengthening ownership	3	21%	5	71%			8	67%	16	38%
Experiences with program-based approaches (SWAPs) and pooled financing	1	7%	2	29%	4	44%	7	58%	14	33%
Using country systems for procurement	3	21%	3	43%	1	11%	7	58%	14	33%
Mutual accountability, including independent reviews of aid	2	14%	4	57%			8	67%	14	33%
Aid management practices and capacities	3	21%	2	29%	2	22%	7	58%	14	33%
Harmonizing budget support modalities	3	21%	2	29%	3	33%	5	42%	13	31%
Initial evaluation of the PD	4	29%	3	43%	1	11%	4	33%	12	29%
Using country systems for financial management	3	21%	3	43%	1	11%	5	42%	12	29%
Reforming technical cooperation	1	7%	2	29%	3	33%	6	50%	12	29%

TOPICS for all workshops	Mauritius		Accra		Honduras		Manila		TOTAL	
	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	Participants %	# of mentions	Participants %
Building capacity for results, including statistics	3	21%	1	14%	3	33%	4	33%	11	26%
Donor incentives to improving aid effectiveness	5	36%	1	14%	1	11%	4	33%	11	26%
New and emerging donors	1	7%	1	14%	3	33%	5	42%	10	24%
Harmonizing technical coop.	2	14%			2	22%	6	50%	10	24%
Putting aid on budget	2	14%			2	22%	6	50%	10	24%
Strengthening country systems	3	21%					6	50%	9	21%
Experiences with PRSs, medium term financial frameworks	1	7%	3	43%	2	22%	3	25%	9	21%
Integrating assistance from private foundations	2	14%	2	29%	1	11%	4	33%	9	21%
Performance assessment frameworks & coordinating conditionality	2	14%	2	29%	1	11%	4	33%	9	21%
Role of CSOs in aid effectiveness			3	43%	2	22%	3	25%	8	19%
Using country systems for "results"	2	14%			3	33%	3	25%	8	19%
Joint Analytical work			1	14%	1	11%	6	50%	8	19%
Aid sustainability	2	14%	1	14%	1	11%	3	25%	7	17%
Program v. project aid	1	7%			3	33%	3	25%	7	17%
Integrating vertical funds	2	14%	1	14%			4	33%	7	17%
Collaborative assistance strategies			2	29%	1	11%	3	25%	6	14%
Harmonization of fiduciary requirements			1	14%	2	22%	3	25%	6	14%
Aid effectiveness experiences in infrastructure	1	7%			1	11%	3	25%	5	12%

TOPICS for all workshops	Mauritius		Accra		Honduras		Manila		TOTAL	
	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	Participants %	# of mentions	Participants %
Joint missions			2	29%			3	25%	5	12%
Applying PD to gender					1	11%	4	33%	5	12%
Aid effectiveness in Fragile States	2	14%			1	11%	1	8%	4	10%
Applying Paris Declaration to environment, including using country systems for environment	1	7%			2	22%	1	8%	4	10%
Health as a tracer sector	2	14%			1	11%	1	8%	4	10%
Aid effectiveness experiences in Education					2	22%	2	17%	4	10%
Applying Paris Declaration to human rights					2	22%	2	17%	4	10%
Delegated cooperation			1	14%	1	11%	2	17%	4	10%
Experiences on Division of Labor	2	14%					2	17%	4	10%
Increasing cofinancing	1	7%	1	14%			1	8%	3	7%
Progress on "Results Agenda"							2	17%	2	5%
Other: Strengthening implementation of Paris Declaration in provincial/ local government level							2	17%	2	5%
Development education					1	11%			1	2%
Graduation of countries. Classification of States based on per capita income					1	11%			1	2%
Integrating different aid modalities into medium planning	1	7%							1	2%
Other: HQ/Field Disconnect			1	14%					1	2%

TOPICS for all workshops	Mauritius		Accra		Honduras		Manila		TOTAL	
	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	participants %	# of mentions	Participants %	# of mentions	Participants %
Aid effectiveness experiences in other sectors										
Other: Common reporting and project implementation guidelines							1	8%	1	2%
Other: Reduce aid conditionality							1	8%	1	2%
Other: Avoid overloading the agenda							1	8%	1	2%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>88</b>		<b>68</b>		<b>85</b>		<b>197</b>		<b>438</b>	